

# Prayer, Praise & Promises

A Daily Walk  
Through the Psalms

WARREN W. WIERSBE



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For Peter and Viann Schroeder,  
very special friends whose generosity,  
hospitality, family, and ministry have  
greatly enriched our lives. Thank you!

Warren and Betty Wiersbe



## Preface

**T**HIS BOOK GREW OUT OF MY MINISTRY AT BACK TO THE BIBLE BROADCAST. I began a four-minute devotional program called *DynaMoments*, which local radio stations could “drop into” their daily schedule. My aim was to go through various books of the Bible and focus on one key truth in each broadcast. It wasn’t the easiest broadcasting I’ve ever done, but the Lord blessed our efforts.

We discovered that the series on the Psalms was especially appreciated by the listeners, so we published a series of *DynaMoments* booklets to meet this need. Then it was decided to publish the meditations from the Psalms in a more durable book, and Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan, assisted us in the project.

When Back to the Bible Broadcast stopped publishing books, they put the *DynaMoments* meditations from the Psalms on their website to help believers in their daily devotional time. There were calls for a more permanent edition, and Baker Publishing Group kindly agreed to bring out this new edition under their imprint.

It always rejoices authors when they hear that something they have written is being used by the Lord to encourage His people in many parts of the world. I trust that this new edition will have a wide and effective ministry. My thanks to Back to the Bible Broadcast for granting me the publishing rights and to Chad Allen at Baker Publishing Group for his valuable help in bringing out this new edition.

May these “miniature meditations” enlighten and encourage you and enable you to do the will of God faithfully from your heart.

Warren W. Wiersbe



## Preface to God’s Hymnal

**H**AVE YOU EVER READ THE PREFACE TO THE HYMNAL USED IN YOUR church? Few people ever do. The preface to God’s hymnal (the book of Psalms) is Psalm 1. It begins with a word we often use—*blessed*. Nowhere does Scripture tell us that God blesses programs or promotions. But it does teach that He blesses individuals. He blessed Abraham so he might be a blessing to others. And He blesses us so we might bless others.

What you delight in is what will direct your life, so be careful what you enjoy. The blessed person delights in the law of the Lord (v. 2). He delights so much in the Word of God that he *meditates* on it during the day. Meditation is to the soul what digestion is to the body. It means assimilating the Word of God.

The blessed person is like a tree (v. 3). A tree has roots. The most important part of your life is your “root system.” Don’t be like the ungodly, who are like chaff (v. 4). Chaff doesn’t have roots. It is blown away by every wind that comes along. Your root system is important because it determines your nourishment. It also determines your stability and your strength when the storm comes and the wind starts to blow.

People can’t see your root system, but God can. Praying and meditating on the Word of God will cause your roots to go down deep into His love.

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**God delights in blessing His children. But we must prepare ourselves for His blessings by first appropriating the resources He has given us. Delight in the Word of God and feed on it. But do more than occasionally read the Word; meditate on it constantly. Make it your source of spiritual nourishment, and God will bless you with strength and stability.**

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## Separated and Saturated

**T**WO OF THE MOST POPULAR WORDS IN THE CHRISTIAN VOCABULARY are *bless* and *blessing*. God wants to bless His people. He wants them to be recipients and channels of blessing. God blesses us to make us a blessing to others, but He has given us certain conditions for receiving blessings.

First, *we must be separated from the world* (v. 1). The world is anything that separates us from God or causes us to disobey Him. Separation is not isolation but contact without contamination. Sin is usually a gradual process. Notice the gradual decline of the sinner in verse 1. He is *walking* (Mark 14:54), *standing* (John 18:18), and then *sitting* (Luke 22:55). Becoming worldly is progressive; it happens by degrees. We make friends with the world; we become spotted by the world; we love the world, become conformed to it, and end up condemned with it. Lot is an example of someone who became worldly. He looked toward Sodom, pitched his tent toward Sodom, lived there, lost everything, and ended in sin.

Second, *we must be saturated with the Word* (v. 2). Whatever delights us directs us. We saturate ourselves with the Word by meditating on it. Meditation is to the spirit what digestion is to the body. When we meditate on the Word, we allow the Spirit of God within us to “digest” the Word of God for us. So not only do we delight in the Word, it becomes a source of spiritual nourishment for us.

Enjoy the blessings God has for you and allow Him to make you a blessing to others. (A third condition, being situated by the waters, is the topic of our next devotional.)

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**God desires to bless us, but we must meet His conditions for receiving blessings. By staying separate from the world and keeping saturated in the Word, we may expect God’s blessings. Resolve to meditate on the Word of God and obey it. He will make you a blessing to others.**

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## Are You Situated by the Waters?

**A** TREE IS A BLESSING. IT HOLDS SOIL, PROVIDES SHADE, AND PRODUCES fruit. The godly are like trees, with root systems that go deep into the spiritual resources of God's grace (v. 3). But sadly, many professing Christians are not like trees but are like artificial plants or cut flowers with no roots. They may be beautiful for a while, but soon they die.

A tree needs light, water, and roots to live. We all have resources upon which we draw life. The question we need to ask ourselves is, where are our roots? The person God can bless is planted by the rivers of water. We must be careful not to be like Christians who are dry and withered and depend upon their own resources. They are like tumbleweeds, blown about by any wind of doctrine.

To have the blessings of verse 3, we need to meet the conditions of verses 1 and 2. That is, we must first be separated from the world and saturated with the Word to be situated by the waters.

God desires to bless us, but we need to meet certain conditions to receive His blessings. We bear fruit only when we have roots, and we must draw upon spiritual resources to bring forth fruit in due season. To bear the fruit of the Spirit, we must allow the Spirit to work in us and through us.

In contrast to the believer, the ungodly are not like trees but are like chaff. They have no roots, produce no fruit and are blown about. The ungodly reject the Word of God and will perish without hope (v. 6). As Christians we must not reject the ungodly but try to reach them. God blesses us so that we might be a blessing to others. His Spirit helps us bear fruit that can help win the lost.

Are you like a tree or like chaff?

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**We need God's resources to bear fruit. But where we place our roots is paramount. Only as we grow them deeply into the spiritual resources of God's grace will we produce fruit. Make the Bible your spiritual resource. Delight in it and feed your soul with its truth. God can use you to help win the lost.**

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## When God Laughs

**A**RE YOU SURPRISED THAT GOD LAUGHS? “HE WHO SITS IN THE HEAVENS shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision” (v. 4). God has a sense of humor, but His laughter is the kind that is born of judgment. It’s the laughter of derision, the laughter of irony. What is God laughing at? He’s laughing at puny little kings and rulers who have united to shake their fists at His throne and tell Him they don’t want Him to rule over them (vv. 2–3). God laughs at them because He knows man cannot survive without submitting to His authority. Man is made in the image of God, and if he fights against Him, he fights against himself. Man, in his rebellion, tries to make God in his own image. He thinks God can be treated with disdain and disobedience. And God laughs.

We can laugh when we read the headlines or watch television reports. We see a world in turmoil, a world united against God, but we laugh because He is still on the throne. “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion” (v. 6). Jesus Christ is God’s King, and He is on the throne. Therefore, we can look at the nations as they are in turmoil, as they unite against God, and we can smile—in fact, we can laugh. They are fighting a losing battle. Jesus Christ is on the throne of the universe, and we who are Christians are seated with Him on that throne.

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**As believers, we are to be witnesses for Christ. Reaching a world that rebels against God’s authority can be difficult. Be encouraged, for your efforts will not be wasted. God is in control and one day will bring all governments and earthly powers into submission. Pray that He will use your life to reach others and glorify Himself.**

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## Four Voices

### Part 1

**T**HE WORLD IS GETTING NOISIER. SO MANY VOICES VIE FOR OUR ATTENTION. The result is that many people are getting the wrong instructions. It is important that we have discernment in a noisy world filled with propaganda. We need the truth.

We need to distinguish the four voices of Psalm 2. The first is *the voice of defiance*—the nations of the world (vv. 1–3). It is amazing that the nations would defy almighty God. He has provided for them (Acts 14:17) and determined their histories (Acts 17:26). Why do the nations rebel? They seek freedom without God. P. T. Forsythe said, “The purpose of life is not to find your freedom. The purpose of life is to find your Master.” Authority demands submission (Matt. 11:29).

The world is a mess morally, intellectually, socially, politically, economically and ecologically because it has defied God. Man is made in God’s image. The irony is that when man rebels against God, he rebels against himself.

Second, we have *the voice of derision*—the voice of God the Father (vv. 4–6). While there is tumult on earth, there is tranquility in heaven. God laughs because the kingdom is secure; the King has been established. Jesus is God’s King. Though the nations rebel, we don’t need to worry, for the King is already enthroned in heaven.

Listen to the voice of God. He is laughing at the world’s rebellion, and you can laugh with Him if Jesus is your King.

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The world often tries to drown out the truth. Its voice of defiance is clear. The world’s corruption is a result of its defiance. Take inventory of the voices you listen to. Are you part of the voice of defiance, or can you laugh with God at the world’s rebellion?

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## Four Voices

### Part 2

**A** THIRD VOICE WE HEAR IN THE WORLD IS THE VOICE OF DECLARATION—God the Son (vv. 7–9). He runs the universe by decree, not by democracy. He knows everything, is everywhere, and can do anything. God’s decrees will succeed. Puny, foolish men with their godless living will not eradicate or hinder His decrees.

God decrees that Jesus Christ is His Son. Jesus is God, and He is King by nature, by conquest, and by His resurrection. He is reigning today, and we can reign in life through Him (Rom. 5:17).

God also decrees that He will break the rebellious nations with “a rod of iron” (v. 9). When His scepter of righteousness goes forth in judgment, the nations will cry out, not in repentance but in rebellion. God already has given the nations to His Son (Matt. 4:8–10).

The fourth voice is the *voice of decision*—the Holy Spirit (vv. 10–12). He wants us to learn—to be wise, to be instructed. Many depend on philosophy, psychology, and history. These disciplines are helpful, but Christians must rely first and foremost on the Spirit of God to reveal truth.

The Holy Spirit wants us to be *willing to serve*. We serve the Lord, not sin. There is joy with our fear because God is our Father. In searching for liberty, the rebellious crowd practices anarchy, for freedom without authority is anarchy. We are made in the image of God. To rebel against Him is to rebel against our own nature.

The Holy Spirit also wants us to be *reconciled*. God is reconciled to us through Christ (Acts 16:31). Jesus “kissed” us in His birth and death. Today He is the Lamb, but someday He will come as the Lion to judge. God is holy and will not allow sin and rebellion to go on forever.

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**Are you listening to the right voices? “Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him” (v. 12). We are saved by faith through the death of the Son of God. Are you saved? If not, hear His voice and trust in Him.**

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## Are You Sleeping Well?

**H**OW WELL WE SLEEP SOMETIMES INDICATES HOW MUCH WE REALLY trust the Lord. David said, “I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me” (v. 5). We may think we can do that anytime. But what if we had been where David was? He was fleeing from his son, Absalom, who had turned against him and had driven him from Jerusalem. Now David was in the wilderness with his army. It would be difficult to lie down and sleep knowing that you are in a dangerous wilderness and that your own son is against you. Oh, it wasn’t the physical danger that kept David awake. He knew God would protect him. It was the inner spiritual and emotional agony of having his own flesh and blood trying to seize the kingdom from him.

But David said, in effect, “Lord, You are able to give me peace in my heart, the protection I need, the perspective I need. You are able to help me in the midst of this difficult situation.” The heart of every problem is really the problem in the heart. David knew that it was not *the army on the outside* that would keep him awake but *the agony on the inside*.

This psalm starts with David’s cry, “Many are they who rise up against me” (v. 1). He’s pleading for help. The psalm ends with David’s singing a song of praise (v. 8). Your day might begin by your pleading for help. But if you are trusting the Lord, it could end by your praising Him for the help He has given you.

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**Difficult circumstances often rob us of our peace and our perspective. When you find yourself in adverse circumstances or in the face of frightening consequences, admit your trouble and affirm your trust in Him. Then be encouraged that God protects you and gives you peace in the midst of the storm.**

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## Bigger and Better

SOMETIMES GOD'S PEOPLE CAN BE SO DISCOURAGING! IN PSALM 4 WE find David listening to people saying, "Who will show us any good?" (v. 6). David's own men were discouraged. They were going through a trial, and some were saying, "O David, this is the end. God is no longer going to help us." That's hard to take. It's rough when your associates or friends say to you, "Well, you've reached the end. Who will show us any good?"

But David called on the Lord, and God enlarged him. "You have relieved [enlarged] me in my distress" (v. 1). Pressure on the *outside* should make us bigger on the *inside*. The trials of life will press against us and make us either dwarves or giants—either smaller or bigger. But we have to start on the inside. "You have relieved me when I was in distress." How did this happen?

David cried out to God, "You have put gladness in my heart" (v. 7). He started out with sadness and ended with gladness. He started with tears and ended with triumph. Once again he's sleeping beautifully. "I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety" (v. 8).

David discovered that what was important was not the *circumstance around him but the attitude within him*. Let God enlarge you when you are going through distress. He can do it. You can't do it, and others can't do it for you. In fact, others may want to make things even tighter and narrower for you. But when you turn to the Lord and trust Him, He will enlarge you on the inside. You'll come out of your distresses a bigger person because you've trusted in the Lord.

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**There is a relationship between our attitude inside and our circumstances outside. If we maintain the proper attitude, God will use our trials to enlarge us. Are you going through a trial today? Give your circumstances to the Lord and trust Him to enlarge you.**

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## Rest in the Midst of Trials

**P**SALM 4 IS ENCOURAGING BECAUSE IT TELLS US THAT GOD CARES FOR us and gives us several blessings in the midst of our trials. First, He gives us the *blessing of enlargement* (v. 1). *Relieved* means “enlarged.” When God permits enlarged troubles, He enlarges His people; that is, we grow. David is a good example of this (Ps. 18:19, 36). His difficulties revealed his character, and he grew. Enlarged troubles lead to an enlarged life, which leads to an enlarged place and enlarged paths. God had an enlarged ministry for David, but He first had to make him grow.

Second, God gives us the *blessing of encouragement* (vv. 2–3). Eventually, all earthly causes will fail. Only the plan of God will succeed. The Lord is our shield, our glory, and the One who lifts our head. In this life we will have problems, but God encourages us.

Third, God gives us the *blessing of enablement* (vv. 4–5). Difficulties bring us face-to-face with trusting versus temptation (Matt. 4:3–4). David had a right to be angry. Anger can be used of God to bring about righteousness, or it can be used by Satan to bring about sin (James 1:20). *Meditate* means “to discuss with yourself.” It’s so easy to brood when we’re lying in bed, but God gives quietness when we meditate (Ps. 46:10).

Fourth, God gives us the *blessings of enlightenment and enjoyment* (vv. 6–8). David’s people were discouraged. Are you a discourager or an encourager? As Christians, we should have the smile of God upon us (Num. 6:25). We should exhibit gladness and joy in the Lord. God adds to this the blessing of peace and sleep. This is possible when Christ is Savior. So get your eyes off the enemy and on the Lord. The temptation to sin is great during difficulties, but trust in the Lord, and He will give you peace and joy in the midst of difficulty.

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God’s blessings are designed to do more than simply comfort us in our difficulties; they are to help us grow. Take strength from knowing that God is weaving His purposes into your life and that He will reward your trust in Him.

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